

Title

Developing employability for policing: An international undergraduate comparison

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Abstract

How employability is developed by students is of immense importance to the individual and potential employers. Sharing practice in relation to the development of employability for policing helps shape curriculums to prepare students for their future careers and inform policy makers.

Four universities teaching policing undergraduate programmes provided qualitative details of how employability is embedded within their studies. These were compared and contrasted to provide an international comparison. The findings suggest similarities in the ways which the generic employability skills and broader professional skills, such as ethics and reflective practice, are taught. However, differences in how technical/vocational skills are developed.

Keywords – Employability, Higher Education, Policing, International Comparison.

Introduction

With a competitive career marketplace for new graduates, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the National Union of Students (NUS) report that over three quarters of students who attend universities in the UK, do so in order to increase their opportunities for employment (CBI/NUS, 2011). With the continued drive by government to enhance employability within higher education (Cranmer, 2006), along with the concept that both university and vocational education are not mutually exclusive (School of Thought, 2015), employability skills taught within higher education programmes must meet the needs of not only the students, but also their future employers both nationally and internationally.

Definitions of employability are many and varied, for example, Finch et al. (2013) describes graduate 'employability' as including effective oral and written communication, the ability to think critically and solve problems, work-based experience, role specific knowledge and technical skills, along with academic ability. Andrews and Higson (2008) add professionalism, reliability and the ability to apply knowledge and skills in the workplace to this extensive list. Whilst Bell (2016) found that the motivation of undergraduates to be employed in supervisory positions, can significantly improve their chances of employment success upon graduating. When recruiting graduates, businesses report focusing on an individual's attitude and aptitude for work, followed by their experience of the workplace and then the subject

of their degree (CBI, 2015). This diminished interest by employers in the specifics of the degree and the reputation of the institution is also supported by Finch et al. (2013). However wide the definition, Cranmer (2006) suggests that the development of the transferable skills of employability within higher education is of international concern.

Those who teach within criminal justice must take responsibility for preparing students to work successfully within policing (Brown, 1974). This still holds true within contemporary police higher educational programmes wherever they are taught. As academic staff strive to provide the necessary knowledge and understanding in order to equip graduates with the skills for employment in their chosen field, the perceived value of higher education within the police service continues to vary significantly (Paterson, 2011).

This research explores the similarities and differences that exist as to how employability for working within policing are embedded within higher educational programmes in three nations. Understanding these factors will enable policy and practice to be shared to assist in shaping curriculums, inform employers of the ways in which the knowledge and skills they value are taught within an undergraduate degree and as result prepare graduates in the best way possible for their future policing careers.

Policing and higher education

MacNamara (1950) details how Vollmer experimented with university based police-training in California during the early part of the 20th century. This approach focussed on a broad pre-employment education (ibid.).

Higher education has an important role to play instigating and managing change within the police service (Brown, 1974). The embedding of such higher education within the policing industry has had a number of benefits, specifically on police reform and professionalization of the service (Paterson, 2011). Over time most major jurisdictions have proposed that higher education can augment police training.

For example, following the pioneering work of Vollmer, known as the father of police professionalism (Archbald, 2013), a range of criminal justice degree programmes were introduced across the USA. Further programmes followed the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967). This report made many recommendations including that police departments should work towards ensuring that all personnel who are given powers to enforce the law are educated to degree standard (ibid.).

The Wood Royal Commission (Wood, 1997) into the New South Wales Police, Australia was convened to deal with the suggestion of corruption within the organisation. In response to Wood's recommendations, the police service entered into a partnership with Charles Sturt University. This partnership was reviewed after ten years, finding a distinct move towards professionalism from the previous 'stream of activity'. The review also found a significant number of applicants applying to join the police service were of an older age profile than previously, with increased numbers of female applicants (Chan and Dixon, 2007). There appeared to be a complete change of culture, which culminated in a far more healthy and positive outlook for the force (ibid.).

Influentially, Bittner (1980) suggested that exposure to higher education will not make better but different police officers, those who are able to deal with the complex and sophisticated needs of contemporary policing, whilst exploring new ways of completing tasks and formal recognition as professionals. This still holds true in the 21st Century, although across many countries, such as Australia, Canada, UK and the USA, the debate continues as to the desirability of a common educational entry requirement for new police officers. Two-year degree programmes have been successfully implemented internationally, and have been dabbled in as a requirement for confirmation of employment as a police officer in the UK, although predominantly due to both austerity (and the refocus to pre-employment education on a knowledge based certificate) the two-year approach has to a large extent stopped.

A number of reports recommend the need for professional recognition of UK police officers (Neyroud, 2011. Winsor, 2012). Although the police service as a whole is making some progress towards recognition as a profession there is still some way to go. For example, Green and Gates (2014) suggest for recognition a number of factors need to be achieved including university level education, the development of a specific body of knowledge, along with an agreed set of professional attitudes and behaviours.

Across the UK, the Policing Professional Framework (PPF) has established the professional attitudes and behaviours expected of police officers. Examples of such qualities include:

- The ability to make timely decisions, such as using the available evidence before acting, followed by reflection.
- The ability to take the lead and be open to change, such as finding alternate ways to resolve differences, being innovative and able to solve complex problems.
- Be able to deliver a more effective service through work planning, good time management and the ability to complete tasks accurately.
- Upholding professional and ethical standards, while displaying tenacity,

courage and initiative.

- Supporting the ethos of working for the public and with partner agencies, whilst understanding the needs of individuals and communities.
- The ability to work with diverse populations, by communicating effectively and with respect. Explaining ideas, whilst addressing their specific needs, concerns and expectations.

(Skills for Justice, 2010)

In late 2015, The UK College of Policing announced a consultation that will be conducted in relation to new recruits to the UK police service requiring higher education degrees and their senior managers, such as superintendents, educated to Master's level (College of Policing, 2015a). The College of Policing also identifies the importance of offering internal police courses accredited by higher education, which have hitherto not attracted accreditation and in turn external recognition. This reflects the ethos that police officers across the UK are expected to operate at higher levels of accountability and professionalism and require the knowledge and skills to do so.

Comparative international higher educational case studies

BSc (Hons) Policing, Teesside University, UK

Similar to many higher education providers, Teesside University (TU) is committed to enhancing student's employability within the formal taught curriculum (Teesside University, 2015). In practice, the three year full-time BSc (Hons) Policing is one of a range of programmes, including a BSc (Hons) Crime and Investigation, which meets the requirements of the university and the needs of both students and the police service for employability.

The BSc (Hons) Policing evolved from a Foundation Degree originally delivered in partnership with the police service for post-employment police officers. The intention for the new degree was to develop graduates who have the correct attitudes and aptitudes, understand the ethical principles, mission and values appropriate for working within policing, along with the ability to make evidence-based decisions. As with other graduates, students also need to be able to communicate effectively, be motivated, self-disciplined, able to work independently or as a team member, able to reflect on practice and socially aware. Together, these attributes enable graduates to better engage with employers and the wider community.

The BSc (Hons) Policing is a modular based three-year degree providing students the opportunity to study a core of essential subjects supported by a range of options. This approach enables students to construct their own 'pathway' through the degree motivated by their employment aspirations. Modules across the curriculum focus on the disciplines of policing, criminal justice and society, criminal law and its

application, criminalistics, investigation, psychology and research methods. The intention of the curriculum is to reflect the contemporary needs of policing in terms of a blend of knowledge, understanding and technical skills acquisition.

For example, the first year module 'Information security and cyber-crime' develops foundational knowledge of cyber-crime and how data can be secured and crimes investigated. TU is one of a few universities in the UK to offer a degree in policing, which incorporates the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing (CKP) through a second year core module. The CKP is approved for delivery by the College of Policing, who construct the curriculum for this module from aspects of policing knowledge which it is perceived can be taught pre rather than post-employment as a uniformed police officer.

Successfully achieving the CKP assists those who are seeking employment as a uniformed police officer within one of the 43 police forces across England and Wales. However it must be acknowledged, that the successful achievement of the CKP does not guarantee employment as a police officer. The CKP is however, a key element of the College of Policing's 'pre-join strategy', as it forms part of the post-employment police training qualification which new officers are required to achieve through work-based assessment. Pepper and McGrath (2015) identified how undergraduate students studying the CKP directly understood how the knowledge content of the module directly related to their future career opportunities.

Whilst studying the more vocationally focused second year module, 'Fingerprints and their uses in the investigative process', students learn the professional skills of fingerprint interpretation and practice making evidence based decisions on their identifications. This skill development is balanced by discussing ethical dilemmas in relation to fingerprint misidentifications and the associated impacts on perceptions of the administration of justice. During the academic year 2014/15 students also engaged in applying their research skills within the module by examining fingerprint patterns of participants from the UK and USA. Students presented the research outcomes at a conference, which enhanced their communication skills (and CV's). A student studying this professional practice module reported that his employability had improved and career aspirations refocused towards fingerprint analysis as a result of completing the module and engaging in the research (Jennings, 2015).

As well as developing knowledge and understanding, the entire three-year programme of study is supplemented by technical practical exercises, such as the preservation of mock crime scenes, the recovery and packaging of forensic evidence and the presentation of evidence in a mock criminal court, these exercises are then reflected upon and discussed within seminars. Guest speakers from the police service augment this learning by providing 'real life' policing experiences. For example, such speakers have provided insights ranging from the exhumation of human remains to the challenges faced by new police probationers.

External to their studies, students are encouraged to explore opportunities for volunteering in reservist roles such as special constables or the military police along with roles such as victim support etc. These opportunities are further promoted through an annual criminal justice volunteers fair championed by the local police and crime commissioner and held within the university. The aim is to further enhance their employability through work-based experience. If successfully recruited as a volunteer, the student can then negotiate to align their volunteering experiences with an optional 'Volunteering' module during the second year of their study. The university also offers six-week summer work experience placements. These are advertised across all undergraduate students, allowing them to apply and be interviewed for these paid roles. A number of these students have been placed in supporting roles within the police service and other criminal justice agencies.

Foundation Degree (FD) and BA (Hons) in Policing Studies at Liverpool John Moore's University (LJMU), UK.

The Foundation Degree (FD) in Policing Studies was initially formulated by Liverpool John Moore's University (LJMU) to address the higher education requirements of new probationary police officers serving with Merseyside Police.

This was in the period immediately following the publication of a report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2002), which recommended the police seek external recognition for initial police training and employer-led foundation degrees was one of those recommended routes. A number of forces around the country, such as those in Cleveland, Leicestershire, Merseyside, West Mercia and West Yorkshire, enrolled their probationary constables as student police officers on higher educational study programmes. These foundation degrees embraced the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) whilst delivering a higher education element in respect of police studies.

As foundation degrees are intrinsically focused on developing the skills required for employment (Quality Assurance Agency, 2014), the FD met the vocational and higher education requirements for student police officers within Merseyside Police, who studied at LJMU for block days. As a consequence, the university opened the FD to non-police students who were pursuing two-year traditional full-time studies and aspired to be employed as police officers. This was a successful development with an increase in traditional students enrolling on the FD, together with the number of student police officers successfully completing the programme, coalesced into the institutional recognition that a natural progression route was required. This led to the introduction of the BA (Hons) Policing Studies degree. This can be studied in full or part-time mode and both the FD and the BA (Hons) incorporate the Certificate in Policing Knowledge (CKP) as a compulsory module within the second year. LJMU is a College of Policing approved provider to teach the CKP.

Although these programmes are available to non-police students, as non-serving officers they are unable to complete the practical work-based elements of the IPLDP, therefore arrangements are in place to provide alternate educational opportunities. Students are encouraged to apply to the voluntary special constabulary and Merseyside Police have made arrangements in order to facilitate this process. Volunteering also supports the recommendation within Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2002) report for new student officers to undertake a community placement.

Participation in the special constabulary provides the opportunity to develop not only vocational skills and apply in practice the academic material that is taught on both the FD and the BA (Hons) programmes, but also the ability to communicate with people in different and sometimes difficult situations. This key aspect of employability is important and can be further augmented by voluntary enrolment on the LJMU World of Work programme.

The employability element is an important consideration for the policing courses and this is reflected in modules which are offered, for example, in order to reflect the professionalization agenda within policing, modules such as 'Professional Skills' and 'Ethical Policing' are core modules within both programmes in their second year of study. Final year modules have been incorporated to reflect the contemporary and technical nature of policing. For example, an 'International Collaboration' module, allows some students to study in Slovenia and develop knowledge of contemporary policing strategies, whilst a 'Police Practice Research Project' develops research skills. In order to develop knowledge in the area of environmental criminology and linked to intelligence-led policing, students have options to study 'Geographic Information Science (GIS) and Geocomputation for Public Safety'. These learning opportunities are complemented by an annual public lecture from the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, focussing on a contemporary challenge facing policing.

The recent opening of the Liverpool Centre for Advanced Policing Studies, is intended to create future opportunities for employability, and staff research informing teaching practice, including specialist areas such as child protection. Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study will also be offered which link policing to other academic areas, leading to opportunities for graduate employment in, for example, cybercrime and forensic studies. These innovative programmes reflect the changing nature of modern-day policing and equip graduates with up-to-date knowledge and skills.

These future programmes are not solely intended to address employability issues for potential recruits to policing, but also address the on-going developmental needs for the existing wider police workforce. It is often cited by the College of Policing that continuing professional development (CPD) within the Police Service is an issue that

has traditionally been neglected. Consequently, it is an area that requires substantive effort to redress whilst meeting future diverse developmental needs of constantly changing and challenging demands within policing (Ratcliffe, 2015).

Associate Degree in Policing Practice (ADPP) Charles Sturt University (CSU), Australia.

Charles Sturt University (CSU) has been committed to the education and Professionalisation of Policing for over 20 years. The Associate Degree in Policing Practice (ADPP) has been taught successfully for 17 years. Whilst CSU offers a variety of pathway programs preparing future police officers and a wide variety of professional development programs for serving officers and staff, the ADPP is a unique and a successful model of collaboration between a police force and a university.

The ADPP was originally developed as a result of criticisms of the New South Wales Police Force (NSWPF) by the Wood Royal Commission (Wood, 1997). The Commission made recommendations for all new recruits to undertake a university education prior to entry in an effort to tackle what they described as entrenched corruption and the negative elements of police culture (ibid.). In response the NSWPF developed a collaborative program with CSU which aimed to meet the requirements for reform whilst maintaining elements of police training and education which they felt essential in preparing new officers for policing (Bradley, 1996).

CSU and the NSWPF determined that all potential new recruits to the NSWPF would be required to complete the ADPP. The program is unique in terms of the entry, delivery and recruitment processes and offers an alternate pathway for recruitment which, judging by the longevity of the existing program, provides a sustainable solution to incorporating higher education alongside police training building on a model of professionalisation (Chambers, 2004).

One of the key principles of the CSU and NSWPF collaborative approach is that the number of recruits required by the NSWPF governs the number of vacancies on the program. Unlike other pathway programs to policing, students undertaking the ADPP must meet all of the academic (CSU) and professional requirements (NSWPF) of the program in order to be offered employment. As a result of fluctuating recruitment, student numbers have ranged from 40 to 900 per intake. An attrition rate of approximately 20% is comprised of students who determine that they no longer wish to pursue a career in policing or who fail to meet the professional suitability or academic standards. These students are able to transfer successful subject credits completed in the ADPP to other degree program at CSU.

The benefits of this collaborative approach to police education are numerous. For example, the demographic mix of students is much broader providing the NSWPF

with greater diversity in background, sex, race and age. This is largely attributed to applicants being aware at enrolment that if successful in all aspects of the programme they will be offered employment. The curriculum is also tailored to ensure that the learning meets the academic and professional skills required for employment. This is achieved through the curriculum being developed and delivered by both police and university staff. There are also financial benefits to the police service, for example, students are not paid trainees, rather traditional undergraduate students receiving a modest stipend. If successful at the halfway point of their studies, they are recruited by NSWPF. Whilst the benefits are considerable, it should be noted that the vast fluctuation in the number of students enrolled is problematic and needs to be considered in relation to the curriculum, teaching and physical resources.

To ensure student diversity and opportunity, the initial elements of the ADPP can be studied either face to face or by distance education. The distance education option provides study opportunities for those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot commit to extended periods away from home. However, the mandatory 16-week intensive programme must be completed at the co-located University/Police Academy. During these early phases of the ADPP, students study a broad range of integrated subjects including aspects of law and procedure, police ethics, problem solving and making sound decisions, communication, investigation and professional reflection. Students are assessed across a broad range of academic and practical scenarios and must meet the required standards in order to be offered employment.

On completion of this intensive study period, successful students are sworn in as police officers and commence a one-year probationary period on a police salary whilst also completing the final 6 subjects of the ADPP. This period of study requires them to demonstrate the mastery of core skills and abilities as well as completing academic study, which includes reflecting upon their employment-based practice and learning. Success in their probationary year results in both confirmation in the role as a police officer as well as graduation with the ADPP. They are then eligible to complete their Bachelor degree at their own pace by building on the ADPP.

This collaborative style arrangement is dependent on a number of factors including the scale and vision of a Police Force and University who are both committed to the partnership.

With the exception of the ADPP, other programs offered by CSU and universities in Australia suffer from a slight identity crisis, as there is no nationally agreed university curriculum for potential future police officers or any agreement that graduates from such programs will be employed within policing. It must also be acknowledged that some of the specific skills required for policing cannot readily be duplicated outside of the policing practice environment. Like the development of many emerging or new professions, policing and the higher education need to work in unison to ensure the potential benefits to both the future profession and the future professionals.

Bachelor of Arts in Police Studies (BAPS) – University of Regina, Canada.

Hutchins (2015) reports that there are about 69,000 police officers in Canada and it is estimated that about one-third of them are graduates of one or two-year college programmes and approximately 30% have university degrees (Ruddell and Eaton, 2015). Although few police services require applicants to have completed post-secondary educational programmes there is growing interest in increasing the proportion of university graduates in policing (Council on Canadian Academics, 2014). In response to a demand from current and prospective officers, since 2000, a number of four-year degrees in police studies have been established throughout the country (Morris and Barter-Trenholm, 2014).

With respect to preparing students for employment in policing careers most Canadian criminal justice and policing programmes have a liberal arts orientation that favours critical examination, reflection on ethical conduct, working toward social justice and social awareness rather than professional proficiency, acquiring practical skills, or “hands on” learning. In what follows the University of Regina’s (U of R) four-year Bachelor of Arts in Police Studies (BAPS) is highlighted as a programme that attempts to balance the liberal arts and professional proficiency requirements.

BAPS was founded in 2000 in response to members of the police community and justice system stakeholders who had identified the need for an academic programme that prepared students for policing careers. Stakeholders from these agencies remain involved in the BAPS as advisory board members and these police and justice system officials regularly review the curriculum to ensure its relevance and approve changes to the programme. BAPS is offered by the Department of Justice Studies, which operates within the University’s Faculty (College) of Arts, and this is a fairly standard arrangement in Canada. U of R students have two BAPS degree routes: the first is professionally focussed and includes placement with a police service, this requires students to have confirmed employment by the police service or other law enforcement agency before commencing their fourth year of study; the second is an academic program in policing, which includes a policing-related practicum (University of Regina, 2015). The professional track option offers students who become police officers academic credit for their academy training thus enabling them to reduce their time in university by one year. The challenge, however, is that very few students are actually hired after their third year, so most policing students graduate from the academic track.

Consistent with its liberal arts orientation the University ensures that students explore the complexities of Canadian society along with the role of law and policing within such democracies. BAPS also develops student understanding of a broad range of perspectives relating to contemporary policing, including the social impact of crime (University of Regina, 2015). Students are required to complete coursework on criminological and social justice theory, research methods, issues in legal and

restorative justice, and courses arranged around themes, such as mental health and substance abuse in a justice context, crime intelligence and analysis, police leadership and community policing (Greenberg, 2014). In order to ensure that students learn from instructors with strengths in these issues, a number of police officers and other practitioners have been hired to teach classes in their areas of expertise. Students enjoy their interactions with these practitioners as they offer their insights into the internal operations of their agencies and expectations for employment.

One distinctive feature about the BAPS is the requirement that all students complete two 15-week practicums in their second and fourth years so they can build upon their theoretical knowledge working within justice systems. Practicum students have worked with local, provincial, and federal agencies across Canada and a small number have participated in international practicums. The two mandatory practicum experiences provide students with an opportunity to develop their “hands on” skills and establish reputations within these agencies, which can also provide a pathway to employment.

In addition to their formal university education, students are strongly encouraged to participate in non-credit learning opportunities. Examples include volunteering in training scenarios taking place at the Saskatchewan Police College, the academy for all municipal officers in the province, which is on the University of Regina grounds. BAPS students have also participated in training offered by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police training academy as volunteers and research subjects. They are also encouraged to participate in the citizen's police academy with the Regina Police Service, which is an 11-week programme offering participants a comprehensive overview of policing. Students have also attended policing workshops and conferences and those who aspire to research oriented positions (such as crime analyst) have presented the results of their scholarship, often carried out with their professors, at the meetings of professional associations.

Students express the desire to develop skills that will give them an advantage when applying for work, especially as the economy constricts and there is stiff competition for jobs. While all BAPS students follow a similar academic pathway in their undergraduate studies, one characteristic that differentiates these individuals is their willingness to participate in non-credit learning opportunities. Highly motivated students are more apt to participate in these events and this may give them a significant advantage when it comes to applying for employment.

Discussion

A police officer should possess a good theoretical grounding of crime and justice, be intellectually adept to act with discretion and judgement in order to come to individual, logically sound conclusions (Hall-Dalwood, 1929). This premise is

supported by Brown (1974), who suggests that educational programmes for future police officers should develop a grounding in the broader social sciences providing them with an understanding of the current issues, how people behave and the application of the law. Bittner (1980) promotes a curriculum which blends educational, technical and vocational development. De Schrijver and Maesschalck (2015) identify that police training should play a part in the development of moral reasoning skills, both in theory and practice, along with the development of their thorough understanding of the code of ethics and powers associated with their new role. All of the case studies demonstrate a blend of academic, technical and vocational development. Unsurprisingly, all of the programmes reviewed contain an exploration of the legal aspects of working within policing along with a focus on ethics and reflective practice. However, the vocational development of learners is compulsory within the programmes at the U of R, Canada and CSU, Australia. Across the two UK case studies, vocational development is limited to voluntary opportunities across a range of policing and criminal justice agencies.

Students therefore need to be informed and encouraged to develop their understanding and aptitudes whilst embracing the opportunities provided by work-experience/internships to assist them in learning about their chosen area of work and if it is right choice for them (CBI, 2015). Cranmer (2006) suggests that engaging with employers to provide work experiences for students impacted positively on the employment outcomes for graduates. As Andrews and Higson (2008) highlight, employers value graduates who have experienced the workplace. Moreover, Wright et al., (2011) identify how, the demonstration of a good working ethic and prior work experience points to a candidate's successful completion of police training.

Research across a number of European countries concluded that employers expected graduates to have high levels of discipline specific knowledge and skills, and also the ability to communicate and interact with others (Andrews and Higson, 2008). Tymon (2013) reports how undergraduate students value the broader skills and attitudes such as communication and teamwork but seem to interpret 'employability' as focusing only on achieving employment immediately on graduating. The ability to communicate effectively across a range of diverse audiences are embedded within undergraduate quality frameworks (Quality Assurance Agency, 2014), along with the qualities expected of a police officer within the Policing Professional Framework (PPF). Opportunities to develop such communication skills are described within the undergraduate 'policing' case studies reported. Perhaps, as highlighted by Tymon (2013), higher education needs to do more to enhance the promotion of additional opportunities offered throughout undergraduate studies to develop such employability skills.

The ability for students to conduct research/investigation is a core theme across all of the case studies. If there is an expectation, as detailed in the Policing Professional Framework, for police officers to make evidence based decisions and reflect on their

practice, then their ability to be critical consumers of both criminological and policing research, in order to inform their decisions, is an essential tool for future officers. There is also a recurring theme of police practitioners being involved as either guest lecturers or in more formal teaching roles. These unique insights they offer into operational policing enable students to relate their learning to the outside world, and if supported effectively with related seminars, can complement both the academic and technical learning. This practitioner based teaching approach mirrors those used in the more traditionally viewed professions such as law and medicine.

Paterson (2011) suggests that higher education provides essential understanding of the internationalisation of both crime and policing. This subject is becoming increasingly essential for the police service and of growing interest to students. With the exception of CSU, Australia, the case studies all demonstrate an international aspect to their programmes to a greater or lesser extent. For example, while the TU programme has a whole 'International Policing' module, LJMU and the U of R offer opportunities for students to study abroad. In addition to theoretical knowledge of transnational crime and justice, some of the core skills of employability identified by Tymon (2013) of communication and team-working are transferable. However there are some obvious barriers to the international employment of graduates from policing programmes including the legal context, language skills and the right to work in a specific country. Although applications to be uniformed police officers across England and Wales can be made by citizens of the European Economic Area/Economic Community, Commonwealth, or a national from a foreign country who has no restrictions on staying in the UK (College of Policing, 2015b). Although some forces implement additional residency requirements (*ibid.*).

It is important for higher educational programmes, such as the case studies, to be valued by the police services and their leaders as meeting the needs for future employees as well as serving officers and staff. If police officers are willing to act as either guest lectures or trainers teaching within higher educational programmes, then there must be some value seen in higher education, the value of which requires reinforcing and 'marketing' across the police service as a whole. The College of Policing (2015a) consultation on a higher educational framework requiring future police officers across England and Wales to be qualified to graduate level, will do much to promote this idea, however, as Paterson (2011) describes, there is still a perception amongst police officers across England and Wales that policing is a vocation focused on practice, this does not necessarily appear the case internationally.

Policing has historically been seen as an occupation rather than profession and Bittner (1980) observes that professional recognition will take a significant amount of time to come to fruition. It is plausible that as officers increase their formal education, the public's perception of policing as a profession will also change. The police service's requirement for recognition as a profession, equal to that of doctors and

lawyers, along with the development of both knowledge and skills prior to employment, was identified in reviews conducted by Neyroud (2011) and Winsor (2012). Subsequently, the College of Policing was established, which identifies the need to have a professional policing workforce with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that reflect their role in society (College of Policing, 2015c). As with other professions, there is a move towards a voluntary membership scheme for policing practitioners along with an increasing number of partnerships between the police service and institutions of higher learning, such step changes may alter perceptions about the policing profession.

Conclusion and recommendations

Finch et al., (2013) classify the more generic knowledge and skills required for employability in to several categories, with soft skills along with problem solving skills being the most important, which suggests that the priority for the development of programme learning outcomes should be focused on these softer skills including listening, communication, writing and general professionalism. As Tymon (2013) highlights, the value of formal and informal opportunities to enhance such skills, which exist across the case studies reviewed, should be promoted to students throughout their studies and their involvement, as in some programmes, should become a matter of policy.

To some extent there has also been the move to identify specific policing knowledge which can be taught pre-employment, however, as Paterson (2011) identifies, there is also a need for a core set of underpinning skills to be developed for policing higher education. These underpinning skills, knowledge and professional practice must be recognised and accepted across the entire profession of policing. Blending these generic skills with vocational development opportunities, such as those evident across the case studies, will assist in meeting the requirements of the future policing profession.

There is also a need for the development of generic employability skills, which are accepted internationally (Cranmer, 2006). These are particularly important if there is a move to recruit both UK graduates and those from other countries as police officers.

These case studies demonstrate that some of the knowledge and skills required by a police officer are already embedded within higher education along similar core themes. Although some overarching policy and guidance across both higher education and the policing profession, would do much to assist the development of student employability in order to meet the needs of the future police service both locally and globally.

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